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Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-fifth session
22 February–4 March 2011
Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives

Statement submitted by the National Alliance of Women's Organizations, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.6/2011/1.

10-66892 (E) 291210

Please recycle

Statement*

1. NAWO, the National Alliance of Women's Organizations, is an umbrella for over 60 women's organizations and individual supporters. It provides representation and support for members and works to promote gender equality and the implementation of internationally agreed instruments for women's human rights. Working with sister organizations in Scotland and Northern Ireland as members of the Joint Committee on Women of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, it presents members' concerns to the European women's lobby and vice versa lobbies at national level on gender equality issues. NAWO participates actively at Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) prep-com meetings in Geneva and regularly sends delegations to CSW in New York.

2. In 2010, NAWO contributed to the Women's National Commission (WNC) publication, *What's Beijing got to do with me?* produced to celebrate Beijing+15. *We deeply regret the decision of the present Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to abolish this unique, widely admired and inexpensive part of the national machinery to hear and heed women's voices, especially as it was set up in 1969 in response to the United Nations request that Member States should have mechanisms in place for hearing and working with informed women.*

3. Also in 2010 at a side-event, *Age Cannot Wither Us*, during the fifty-fourth session of CSW, NAWO, with speakers from Ghana, the Baha'i and Northern Ireland, examined the plight of older women. Demographic transition towards older populations is occurring in both developed and developing United Nations Member States.[1] Older women globally, including many widows, suffer particularly from poverty, loneliness and ill health and the numbers are set to grow substantially. In the United Kingdom alone, in 2008, 3.3 million pensioners were receiving means-tested pension credit, two thirds of them women. The poverty level of women pensioners in the United Kingdom remains one of the highest in Europe and State provision one of the lowest.

4. Women's low earnings in employment, along with unequal domestic responsibilities, is an important contributory factor to this situation. At school, girls fail to study the subjects most likely to equip them for well paid employment. Thus, twice as many women as men work in the public sector, and thousands are now likely to lose their jobs as a result of policies to cut government spending as a means to repaying national debt in the global financial crisis.[2] Most women will be in clerical work lacking the qualifications and training to find well paid work elsewhere.

5. NAWO is therefore particularly concerned that the fifty-fifth session of CSW should take action to ensure girls attend and have equal access to education with boys and that within schools girls are encouraged to study subjects that should help to break down segregation in the labour market, which contributes significantly to traditional unequal pay and to women's relative poverty. Gender stereotyping within

* Issued without formal editing.

[1] R. Lee, "The demographic transition: three centuries of fundamental change", *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, vol. 17, No. 4, 1 November 2003, pp. 167-190 (24).

[2] Women's Budget Group, Analysis of United Kingdom Coalition Government's Spending Review, 9 November 2010, London.

schools as well as in societies at all levels, has been identified in previous CSW reviews as a hindrance to the advancement of women everywhere; this requires challenging from the earliest days in education.[3]

6. In recent years, while women may substantially outnumber men in biology and medicine, especially nursing, men predominate in maths, physical sciences, computer science and engineering. They are thus much better equipped to find well paid jobs in corporations, while women are more likely to find work in generally less well paid public sector occupations. In the United Kingdom, women make up only 12.3 per cent of all employees in science, engineering and technology (SET) occupations. In addition, more women than men are in lower level jobs (26.5 per cent against 16.5 per cent of men). Women are less likely to be in SET management and their hourly rate of pay, in professional work, leads to an unacceptable pay gap of 11.1 per cent, slightly lower than the national pay gap of 12.6 per cent.

7. Women's lower level of occupation also reduces their pension earnings. Much can be done to alter this situation — in the United Kingdom, the planning and building of the Olympics 2012 village has women in all the trades and in management at all levels.[4] The political will is required, as is effective and knowledgeable leadership to devise and implement a strategy for getting women in and changing the culture of the workplace. It can be done.

8. Inequalities build up as women have children. And this too prevents their equal participation in science and technology. Overall, 75 per cent of women between 25 and 49 years of age were in employment in 2008 in the United Kingdom, but for women with children under five, the proportion was 57 per cent. While 38 per cent of women with dependent children worked part time this was true of only 4 per cent of men, reflecting both stereotypes and the real impact of the loss of men's wages/salaries over those of women.

9. Parenting is an expensive task and families are estimated to lose an average of £200,000 per child up to the age of 18, much of it in loss of women's earnings. Elder care also falls mainly to women with about 2.5 million people as "super carers", looking after both the young and the old. Eighty per cent of these are women, most middle aged. They can draw the £53.90 Carer's Allowance, but only if their earnings amount to less than £100 per week and they are not receiving other benefits. NAWO urges Governments to recognize the burden these carers are carrying, and the huge barrier to continuing a useful working career which in turn impacts on women's capacity to remain in well paid work and to their later pension entitlements. Governments are saving at the expense of women.

10. The Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) includes a proposal that nations should prepare parallel budgets indicating the contribution to national prosperity represented by the voluntary sector. As yet, no nation signatory to BPfA has introduced these measures. They would increase respect for voluntary work, raise women's status and promote concern to advance equal pay for work of equal worth.

[3] Agreed conclusions 12 March 2004, as adopted, Commission on the Status of Women, forty-eighth session, 1-12 March 2004, "The role of men and boys in achieving gender equality". See "Agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women on the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action, 1996-2009" (ST/ESA/327), pp. 133-137.

[4] Speech by Lorraine Martin, Head, Olympics Delivery Authority, "Employment skills, equality and inclusion", at the Women's National Commission CSW preparatory meeting, London, October 2010.

Gender-equal earnings would also contribute to national productivity and help to reduce all forms of violence against women, especially domestic violence.

11. NAWO's members include organizations that work for specific categories of women such as widows for whom the difficulties enumerated here are even worse especially in the developing world where harmful traditional practices render them specially vulnerable. Widows for Peace and Democracy (WPD) states there remains a dearth of knowledge about marital status in national statistics; hence we seek the implementation of agreements reached at the fifty-fourth session of CSW to disaggregate data by marital status as well as gender and age. Widowhood is a root cause of girls out-of-school and school drop-outs while child head of households and child brides are more likely to be the children of widows. Widows also experience greater discrimination than married women in training and employment as well as suffering from particularly discriminatory inheritance laws and much violence both domestically and as victims of rape, especially when they may have been expelled from home and become displaced persons and homeless.

12. Action:

- Implement agreements reached previously at CSW such as the collection and analysis of data disaggregated by marital status as well as gender and age.
- Combat gender stereotypes throughout life and marital status stereotypes from puberty.
- Ensure access to education for girls, especially children of widows; monitor education systems to ensure all children continue to be taught without bias, guarding against particular faith or cultural beliefs that undermine gender equality and promote traditional roles.
- Strengthen careers teaching to enable children to see the potential in all available occupations, regardless of gender stereotypes.
- Offer accurate pictures of modern engineering's unisex appeal.
- Encourage school leavers to plan long-term, including seeing the value of contributing to a pension scheme.
- Enlist media support for the promotion of women and men in roles now subject to gender stereotypes. Seek media help in breaking down job segregation.
- Review work now seen as "women's" or "men's" work and reassess its value to the community. Gradually adjust salaries, wages and pensions accordingly.
- Encourage (or require) professional associations and corporations in science and engineering to appoint women to their governing boards. This should be in a context where all boards are required to appoint women.
- Raise State pensions enough to provide all pensioners with a basic standard of living and where member States do not provide them, seek to do so as a basic minimum right.
- Urge Member States to produce parallel accounts reflecting the value of unpaid work.

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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives

Statement submitted by Sudanese Women General Union, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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Please recycle

Statement

Sudanese General Women Union

Enhancement and development of opportunities for women's participation with a view to equal access to full employment and decent work

Introduction

The Sudanese General Women Union (SGWU) is an organization concerned with women's economic, social and political issues. Sudanese women play an indisputable role in these areas, in particular the economic area. It is therefore vital to enhance opportunities for their development and participation, which would improve family living standards and potentially have a direct impact on the national economy.

Legal status of SGWU

SGWU is a national voluntary organization registered with the Humanitarian Aid Commission and the Sudanese Council of Voluntary Associations. The SGWU apparatus and leadership are chosen through free direct election by the base of women volunteers at congresses held regularly every four years. SGWU operates through a general secretariat, headed by a secretary-general and assistant secretaries-general (including an assistant for South affairs), in addition to 15 special secretariats, an advisory panel and a consultative council that monitors performance. It has secretariats in every state and province, as well as grass-roots branches in the form of special district associations. With approximately 27,000 branches and a membership of over five million women, it works across networks with civil-society organizations. One such network comprises 83 organizations. SGWU has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council and works in line with the vision of the State's general strategy.

Vision

SGWU strives for a society where justice and equality prevail with respect to rights and obligations through the economic, social and political empowerment of women.

Mission

SGWU is a national women's organization with a voluntary membership that, guided by deep-rooted principle and values, seeks to strengthen the spirit of solidarity and unity among women and to safeguard their rights and gains. It endeavours to improve and advance the situation of women and achieve their empowerment through awareness-raising, mobilization, participation and capacity-building by way of its agencies, which are coordinated and interlinked at all local, regional and international levels.

Main objectives

- To ensure women's social, economic and political development and empowerment;

- To promote further gains and protection with respect to women's rights and to increase women's representation in decision-making positions;
- To reduce illiteracy rates and raise national awareness in the fields of religion, culture and education;
- To develop SGWU's institutional environment and resources, launch initiatives and establish specialist associations and guilds.

Key factors for success in improving and developing opportunities for women's participation with a view to equal access to full employment and decent work

Constitutional, legislative and legal factors, State policies on women and available opportunities:

Interim Constitution of the Sudan (2005)

Article 12 (1): The State shall develop policies and strategies to ensure social justice among all people of the Sudan by ensuring means of livelihood and employment opportunities and by promoting mutual assistance, self-help, cooperation and charitable work.

Article 32 (1): The State shall guarantee the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all civil, political, social, cultural and economic rights, including the right to equal pay for equal work and to other related benefits.

Article 32 (2): The State shall promote women's rights through affirmative action.

Legislation and laws

All labour legislation in the Sudan is consistent with the definition of a worker and interpretations are based on paid employment or labour pursuant to a contract of employment. The definition includes both males and females. Whether relating to the public or private sectors, this legislation makes no distinction between the rights and obligations of workers on the basis of gender; on the contrary, some laws accord additional rights to women in keeping with those provided for in international instruments.

Some legislative enactments treat men and women as equal, whereas others establish additional rights for women. These include the Public Service Regulations of 1955, which applies in the public sector and accords rights to pregnant and newly delivered women, to women whose spouse has died and to women accompanying a spouse.

National policy for women's empowerment

The national policy for women's empowerment serves as a framework for the government commitment towards women and as a cornerstone for the advancement of women, the achievement of comprehensive development and the successful resolution of women's issues across the board. It also serves as a systematic guide for women's development at the state and local levels. Designed to increase participation by women and strengthen their effectiveness as genuine partners in the realization of comprehensive sustainable development, the policy comprises six core areas of concern: health and environment; education; human rights and law;

political participation and decision-making; peace and conflict resolution; and economic empowerment. With respect to the latter, the policy document identifies challenges, objectives and means, aiming to incorporate the gender perspective into overall economic reforms and policies on the basis of fair equality; the delivery of comprehensive women's health and educational services with a view to the full integration of women into economic activities; structuring and monitoring of gender-balanced budgets; promotion of opportunities for female entrepreneurship; improvement of productive capacities, including the possibility of access to technology, knowledge and skills; comprehensive social security coverage through development of the analytical capabilities of economists at all levels and in all institutions with respect to gender issues; provision of financing and marketing facilities for women, in particular poor and rural women; creation of opportunities for building administrative and development capacities and skills in order to eliminate restrictions imposed on women; gender-mainstreaming in economic policies at all levels; implementation of measures and formulation of policies in the field of maternal, child and family welfare; and greater women's involvement in the elaboration of economic policies and programmes.

Available opportunities

The number of financing opportunities for women in the microfinance project of the Central Bank and several other commercial banks has increased and SGWU special secretariats are engaged in capacity-building and training for women.

Examples of SGWU capacity-building initiatives and activities for women

SGWU's work is administered through 15 special secretariats at the national and state levels, including secretariats for economic development, training, planning, and national, state and local projects, as well as white-collar associations for economic development at the residential-unit level.

The secretariats aim to:

- Increase women's participation in economic activity, develop women's capacities and impart skills to women with the aim of improving their economic situation;
- Train and prepare women, enhance their capabilities and create training opportunities at home and abroad through a variety of institutions in order to widen access to employment and decent work;
- Prepare and design studies of SGWU projects targeting a variety of areas and create foreign and domestic financing channels in order to attract the necessary support for project implementation;
- Improve women's leadership abilities on the basis of project implementation and provide a database for the purpose of forecasting women's needs in the different core areas of development in all states.

Key projects

Women's portfolio project

A number of banks, finance institutions and partnership, funding and charitable bodies contribute to the portfolio. This source of funding is for women

alone and offers substantial facilities, which may be in kind, in cash or in the form of production and other services, with easy finance terms that women can comfortably meet and cope with. Economic advice is also offered, together with feasibility studies and training in skills and performance improvement.

The portfolio is targeted at women who are heads of household, family breadwinners or entrepreneurs, as well as at vulnerable groups of women, associations, private productive groups, widows, divorcees, migrant women and women whose spouses are work-incapacitated. Implementation of the portfolio commenced in 2000 and is still ongoing. Over 9,713 women in all have benefited from the portfolio.

Innovation prize for rural women

The idea of a prize arose following the participation by Mrs. Fatima Khalid, wife of the President of the Republic and honorary chairperson of SGWU, in the First Ladies' Summit on the Economic Advancement of Rural Women, held in Geneva in 1992. The Summit was attended by 70 presidential wives, who sought to promote the development of rural women in the Third World by sponsoring programmes of benefit to rural women in their home countries. The idea materialized in the form of a distinguished cash prize for which innovative rural women would compete and was first put into practice in 1999. Well received by rural women, it was repeated on an increasingly comprehensive and wider scale, with the result that the sixth such prize was awarded in 2006. In 2008, the secretariat convened a national conference on issues of concern to rural women, which produced important recommendations concerning the empowerment of rural women on all fronts, including through training, the provision of funding and easy financing mechanisms.

Interest-free microloans to combat poverty among women

This project involves revolving funds granted in the form of small projects and essentially provided by the SGWU Zakat Office. The funds are for the benefit of poor families and the sums concerned are jointly transacted between SGWU and the Savings and Social Development Bank. SGWU implements the project by selecting women beneficiaries and making all of the necessary arrangements with the Bank, which carries out the funding operation in accordance with regulations and rules agreed among the three partners. The same implementing structure is used for the second portfolio involving revolving funds (microfinance) for impoverished women. Funds are awarded in the form of interest-free loans received directly from SGWU every six months. The full amount is reimbursed at the end of every six months and the funds are reused a second, third and fourth time, meaning that they revolve four times in two years.

A revolving fund to improve the situation of women selling tea and food

This is a SGWU-run project for women in the informal sector and entails revolving funds for women engaged in selling tea and food. Funding is provided in the form of equipment and other means of production. The project was first implemented in Khartoum state in 2004, with 250 women benefiting. After a project impact assessment, the idea was transferred to other states, including those of the Red Sea and Qadaref, before eventually spreading to the remaining states.

Regional women's training centre

A regional women's training centre — the first of its kind — was established to provide special training services for women and to run training courses at the regional and local levels. Expert technical assistance was sought from the International Training Centre (Regional Office for Africa) of the International Labour Organization and an executive committee for the centre was formed. Various external and internal training courses are organized to develop women's leadership capacities at the national and state levels, including courses abroad. Institutional support programmes from such financial institutions as the Islamic Development Bank are also implemented for training purposes.

Challenges and difficulties

- The provision of logistical and material support to ensure that SGWU is better equipped to discharge its functions;
- The provision of resources for attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, which will promote women's access to employment;
- Increase in opportunities for training in gender-sensitive budgeting;
- Training for women personnel in rural and urban areas;
- Increase in opportunities for training in project preparation and marketing for women beneficiaries and work supervisors.

Taking into account the fact that women mostly work out of need and necessity, women's employment has not thus far served as a means to personality enrichment and social status. For women, employment is still arduous and generates only a meagre income that is liable to be controlled and disposed of by men.

Recommendations

- Eliminate discrimination between men and women in the field of employment and devote attention to the establishment of a database on women's employment and training and to the provision of equal opportunities;
- Develop social facilities designed to help working women to fulfil their roles both within and outside the home;
- Operationalize the role of non-governmental organizations in the advancement of working women;
- Provide legal protection and social safeguards.

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Statement submitted by Howard Center for Family, Religion and Society, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.6/2011/1.

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Please recycle

Statement*

1. The Howard Center for Family, Religion and Society applauds the efforts of the fifty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women to further the protection and progress of women and girls throughout the world. Our statement is directed particularly to the scheduled consideration of progress on the agreed conclusions from the Commission's fifty-first session, which addressed "the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child".

2. Consideration of the welfare of the girl child should, we believe, begin by remembering the commitments memorialized in paragraphs 14 to 17 of the Plan of Action of the United Nations Special Session on Children.

3. Herculean efforts must indeed be made to extend protection and hope to girl children who are without parental support whatever the reason, whether for a cause as common as divorce, as deadly as AIDS, or as sinister as sex trafficking. But in reaching out to girl children who are not sheltered by a family, we cannot afford to forget our commitment to protect the world's children by protecting the natural family.

4. This commitment is a continuing one, expressed earlier, for example, in paragraph 39 of the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development: "Particular efforts should be made to protect children and youth by: Promoting family stability and supporting families in providing mutual support, including in their role as nurturers and educators of children."

5. The celebration by the General Assembly of the Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family on 6 December 2004, offered an important opportunity for reflection on the fundamental role of the family. Statements were made on that occasion, among others, by Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury of Bangladesh and Wade Horn of the United States of America. It was also on that occasion when Secretary-General Kofi Annan emphasized the commitment of the United Nations to the family.

6. The Howard Center thanks the Commission for its important work in seeking to better the lives of women and girls worldwide, and urges cognizance of the fact that a core component of such effort must be to protect and promote the family as the fundamental unit of society. We believe that the specific suggestions offered by the United States representative at the Tenth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family have continuing relevance:

(a) Government ought to create the conditions that allow strong and healthy families to thrive;

(b) Government should recognize the unique and irreplaceable contributions of mothers and fathers to the lives of their children;

(c) Public policy ought to strengthen healthy marriages and, where possible, the two-parent family;

(d) Government policy should recognize that every child has dignity and worth, and as such ought to support all children and families.

* Issued without formal editing.

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Statement submitted by Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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Please recycle

Statement*

1. In many cultures of the world, women and girls are holders of the sacred, transmitters of culture, protectors of tradition, and caretakers of others. Women are central to the care and progress of the family and have increasingly become part of the global workforce. In recent decades, equality between women and men, and increasing women's access to public services, have become important topics of formal and informal discussions among politicians, media, communities and families. Governments are deliberating about the legal and economic requirements to support programmes that will provide women and girls full access to education, skill development training, and technology enabling them to participate in full employment and decent work.

2. "Decent work" sums up the aspirations of many people for their working lives. Decent work allows people to engage in employment that is productive and delivers a fair income, in a secure and supportive work environment. Decent work also provides social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, and the encouragement for people to participate in the decisions that affect their lives. For women particularly, decent work offers them the occasion to receive fair and equal treatment and opportunities for growth and advancement. However, women continue to be overrepresented in precarious, low-skilled, low-paid jobs with little prospect for advancement. Women constitute approximately 40 per cent of total world employment yet they earn far less than their male counterparts for the same jobs. Women are also more likely than men to be unemployed, poor, be subject to violence, discrimination, and harassment within their communities and workplaces.

3. It is clear that the greater the demand for equality between women and men so is the need for women to have access to education, skills, support and training. The enormous challenges facing women in particular and society in general means that women and men must both be equally involved in and committed to finding a solution to this problem. For this to be realized there must be common terrain for action that builds skills, alliances, and respect between all people, while unitarily working towards the full realization of women's rights and access to services and decent work.

4. In many developing countries, young girls are expected to look after the home as well as their younger siblings and other children. In such environments they often have limited access to education and are regularly subjected to acts of violence. On this basis women and girls often perceive themselves as being worth less than male members of their family and community. This attitude is upheld as they become adults and start families of their own. This value of being "less than" is subsequently passed on to their children, continuing negative and destructive belief systems and patterns of behaviours.

5. One example of this is from a small mining town in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo girls as young as 6 years of age work alongside their mothers in perilous conditions, collecting and washing minerals, and selling them to mining companies. The young girls become mothers and then, having been exposed to no other options, expect the same of their

* Issued without formal editing.

daughters. The girl children work six to seven days a week, do not attend school, live in dire levels of economic poverty, and are repeatedly subjected to physical and sexual violence. These young girls are not given the opportunity to play freely and happily.

6. In recent years, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and international NGOs have intervened, creating programmes that take girls out of their low-paid dangerous mining jobs. The girls are sent to schools that educate them in basic reading and writing skills while also teaching specific skills such as sewing, carpentry, business accounting, and computer technology. The hope is that, once their education is complete, the girls will not have to return to the mines. In this particular instance, some girls did indeed complete their education, employing their newly developed skills to initiate their own businesses or obtain safer, more secure work. However, many of the girls did not complete their education, returning to the mines because they did not understand the purpose and value of their education. Of pivotal importance is that they could not see the value in their education because they did not recognize their own value.

7. Spirituality and values do not always occupy a prominent place in conversations about education, training, and technology for women and girls. However, while basic human needs remain unfulfilled for so many children, women, and men, it must no longer escape our attention that the failure to provide for all members of the human family is directly connected to humanity's collective erosion of values. This global demise in values directly impacts upon how we see ourselves, how we perceive others, and how we relate with those around us. If we truly want to achieve full participation by and access for women, then conversations about skill building, finance and project implementation cannot be the only conversations we have. It must include those values from now onwards.

8. Even now, Governments and other decision makers are realizing that there is an urgent need to involve social partners in discussions on training and skills development, if the desired changes are to become a reality. It is now clear that Governments can no longer be the sole voices on education and training. The more successful training systems are consistently underpinned by a strong social dialogue. Such a holistic approach teaches practical, hands-on skills, as well as empowering the individual to regain and recognize her or his dignity.

9. Empowerment does not come from the outside. Empowering is a process of understanding and connecting with one's core values and qualities, and learning how to use them. Empowerment is not simply a question of strengthening survival skills or externally redressing wrongs either. It involves inner growth and development whereby one's state of mind changes, since the greatest limitations we face are those we place on ourselves. Personal dignity is a state of being. It can never be fully taken away from an individual so long as she or he continues to maintain it internally. Dignity is a value that includes self-respect and respect for others. Dignity emerges from the intrinsic and innate virtues of peace, love, joy, purity, and truth, which are present within every human being.

10. Our deep realization of these spiritual attitudes is a powerful entry point in shifting the conversation about education and work. From working within the traditional constructs of teacher/student, employer/employee, job descriptions/wages, and roles/responsibilities, we move into the elevated framework of creative contribution, productive participation, and a working community characterized by

positive change and transformation from within the core of each of us. This realization and conscious awareness can afford each of us strength and hope, and can be a powerful tool to help overcome the indignities of unemployment, poverty and violence. On the basis of Government, family and community commitment to values, the previous lost opportunities and restricted access to fair, decent and safe work, can change to allow full participation by women and girls in education, training, and other programmes that will allow for sustainability and true change.

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Statement submitted by Engender, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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Please recycle

Statement*

Jobs for the boys and the girls? Women and girls' experience of segregation in learning and work in Scotland

1. Engender is a women's organization based in Scotland and working on a feminist, anti-sexist agenda. Our aim is to make visible the impact of sexism on women, men, children, society and our social, cultural, economic, and political development. We do this by making the causes and impact of women's inequality visible, promoting gender equality in policy and practice and increasing women's power and influence. Our policy priorities are women's poverty, violence against women and women's representation in decision-making.

2. Engender has organizational members, as well as a large number of individual members, and is Scotland's representative on the Joint Committee on Women of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, which represents women from the United Kingdom on the European Women's Lobby.

3. Engender welcomes the focus of the Commission on the Status of Women on access and participation of women and girls to education, training, science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work.

4. From the beginning of the education pipeline, through to the labour market, girls in Scotland detach from participation in science and technology learning. Ninety per cent of students on higher education information and technology (IT) and engineering courses are male. This contributes to significant occupational segregation in sectors as diverse as energy, information technology, and manufacturing.

5. Scotland's labour market is characterized by occupational segregation, with six of every 10 women concentrated in just ten occupations. Women tend to work in those occupations that pay the least, and gender organizations frequently talk about the "Five Cs" of female-dominated work: cleaning, caring, catering, clerical, and cashiering (retail). The "crowding" of women into these undervalued occupations contributes to women's poverty.

Indicators of segregation

6. Scotland currently has a gender pay gap of 12 per cent, if the hourly pay of full-time women is compared to that of men. For part-time women the gap is significantly larger, with the hourly pay 32 per cent less of that of full-time men. Occupational segregation is a key cause of the gender pay gap. The gender pay gap in science, engineering and technology (SET) associate professions at 13 per cent is larger than the median national pay gap of 12 per cent, and the gap increased between 2008 and 2009 for both SET associate professions and skilled metal and electrical trades.

7. The Scottish Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology (SRC), identify that over 70 per cent of women who have studied SET do not work in SET occupations.

* Issued without formal editing.

8. The Modern Apprenticeship Programme, which is one of the key entry points to the labour market for young people who do not attend college or university, is heavily segregated, and is itself at risk of further entrenching segregation. Fewer than one per cent of plumbing and construction apprentices, and fewer than three per cent of engineering apprentices are female. Fewer than two per cent of childcare apprentices are male.

The Scottish context

9. The Scottish government, as a devolved administration of the United Kingdom, has obligations to deliver on the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the International Covenant on Economic and Social Rights (ICESCR).

10. Although welfare benefits and employment law are not devolved to Scotland under the devolution settlement, but are instead reserved to Westminster, Scotland is responsible for policy and delivery in education and training, in employability activity, and in regulating the public sector.

11. Key levers of change, like *Curriculum for Excellence*, which mandates the content and delivery of learning in schools, and the National Training Programmes, which involve over £50m of public expenditure on vocational learning, are within the grasp of the Scottish government.

12. The government's *Economic Strategy*, the key policy document of the administration, identifies occupational sectors that are of particular significance to Scotland's economy. The majority of these, including energy (with a special focus on renewables), bioscience, tourism, and food and drink, operate within gender segregated labour markets.

Scottish activity on occupational segregation

13. Since Beijing, there have been programmes of activity across Scotland, and the United Kingdom, to tackle occupational segregation and to promote women's engagement with science and technology. These include:

- the establishment of SRC, which works to support women students in SET subjects, women working or returning to SET, and SET employers;
- the Close the Gap initiative, which works with employers, policymakers, sectoral representative bodies, and trade unions to tackle all of the causes of the pay gap, including occupational segregation;
- the Scottish government's cross-directorate occupational segregation working group, which was established in response to a formal investigation by the Equal Opportunities Commission into occupational segregation in the Modern Apprenticeship programme;
- the United Kingdom Women and Work Commission, which was established in 2005 by Prime Minister, Tony Blair, to identify solutions to the causes of the gender pay gap, and whose recommendations were implemented by the Scottish government (then Scottish Executive);
- the implementation of the Gender Equality Duty, which formed part of the Equality Act (2006), and which places a proactive obligation on public sector

bodies to eliminate discrimination and harassment, and promote equality, in their functions as employers, and as service providers (now being replaced by a single equality duty on the public sector as part of the Equality Act (2010));

- the identification of occupational segregation as a priority for Scottish Ministers, as part of the Scottish government's own specific obligations as part of the Gender Equality Duty;
- employability initiatives, like Women@Work, and Women Onto Work, incorporating a supply-side approach to tackling occupational segregation into their work;
- the Scottish Women's Budget Group, which campaigns for a gender budget analysis of the Scottish Budget, has consistently challenged the lack of a gendered approach to the development and delivery of national training programmes, and pay modernization processes;
- Girl Geeks is an interdisciplinary forum for women with a professional interest in technology; and
- private sector organizations, like Cisco Systems and JP Morgan, have developed their own initiatives to engage with girls, as part of corporate social responsibility agendas.

An agenda at risk?

14. It is self-evident that Scotland has made structural gains since the Beijing Platform for Action. The Gender Equality Duty has had the potential to be a lever of change, and to drive practice across the public sector, including within the Scottish government, and within the private sector, via public sector procurement.

15. However, after only two years, it was proposed by the Government of the United Kingdom that the Gender Equality Duty, along with similar duties in respect of race and disability, be replaced by a single duty, which would also include the protected characteristics of sexual orientation, religion and belief, age, pregnancy and maternity, and marriage and civil partnership. While the expansion of protection is to be welcomed, the proposals for the new duty are less clear about the obligations that it will place on public sector bodies, and it is likely that the new duty will be a less effective lever for gender equality.

16. It is also the case that much of the activity around occupational segregation is being delivered by projects and initiatives receiving short-term packages of funding. Despite the requirements of the Gender Equality Duty, there has been no sustained Government activity around occupational segregation that has delivered significant change.

17. Gender mainstreaming is not evident in many of the government departments and non-departmental public bodies responsible for the education, skills, and economic development agendas in Scotland. All have a notional commitment to equality, but this is frequently contained within structures, like equality teams, that are themselves at risk of restructure.

18. As public budgets in the United Kingdom, and consequently Scotland, come under pressure, there is a real risk that marginal projects and functions will have their funding reduced or cut. This is particularly likely to happen in the absence of a

gender budget analysis of the Scottish Budget, and in the absence of a robust public sector duty.

19. **Recommendations for Scotland**:

- A national strategy, lead by a Scottish Minister, for tackling occupational segregation, which would include education and skills, employment, and economic development activity.
- Implementing a robust single equality duty, with clear requirements on public sector bodies to conduct gender impact assessment on all significant policies, including procurement, and to identify robust gender objectives.
- Adequate resourcing and development of existing initiatives which have demonstrated expertise in tackling occupational segregation in general and specifically in the SET sector.
- Visibility for outcomes around women's labour market participation and occupational segregation within national planning frameworks, including the existing National Performance Framework.

20. **Recommendation for the United Kingdom**:

- Appointment of a "Gender and SET" government champion at ministerial level to drive a cross governmental and integrated strategy to tackle gender segregation in education, workforce and science policy.

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Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives

Statement submitted by the International Federation of Business and Professional Women, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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Statement*

1. **The International Federation of Business and Professional Women (IFBPW)** — known worldwide as **BPW International** — commends the recent decision of the sixty-fourth General Assembly to merge the four gender entities of the United Nations into UN-Women — the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. We applaud Member States for having taken this major step forward for the world's women and girls. This unanimous decision by the General Assembly will significantly boost United Nations efforts to promote gender equality, expand opportunity, and tackle discrimination around the globe to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

2. IFBPW has advocated for the creation of a strong United Nations organization that will champion promotion and advancement of the rights of women and girls worldwide and serve as a single well-funded recognized driver to lead the United Nations response for gender equality support. IFBPW wholeheartedly welcomes the appointment of former President of Chile Michelle Bachelet as the first head of UN-Women and as Under-Secretary-General and looks forward to working with UN-Women to support intergovernmental bodies like the Commission on the Status of Women and ensure that all United Nations agencies and organizations live up to their commitments to gender equality.

3. In consultative status with the Economic and Social Council since 1947, IFBPW represents the interests of working women from 96 countries. In 2010, IFBPW commemorated 80 years of advocating for gender equality and empowering women educationally, politically and economically, developing the business and professional potential of women at all levels, determined that our effort will lead to equal participation of women and men in power and decision-making roles.

4. Empowering women to participate fully in economic life across all sectors and throughout all levels of economic activity is essential to build strong economies; establish more stable and just societies; achieve internationally agreed goals for development, sustainability and human rights; improve quality of life for women, men, families and communities; and propel businesses' operations and goals. Yet, ensuring the inclusion of women's talents, skills and experience requires intentional actions and deliberate policies. The Women's Empowerment Principles, forged through a multi-stakeholder consultative process led by UNIFEM (part of UN-Women) and the United Nations Global Compact, provide a set of considerations to help the private sector focus on key elements integral to promoting gender equality in the workplace, marketplace and community.[1]

5. IFBPW is leading the Women's Empowerment Principles awareness campaign, recognizing that this century calls for an equitable world that allows equal access and participation of women and girls to education, training, science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work. Much work, however, is still required in order to realize this vision, with partnerships playing an increasingly vital role to enable the active and interactive participation of governments, international financial institutions, the private sector,

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* Issued without formal editing.

[1] "Women's Empowerment Principles: Equality Means Business", a booklet produced by the Women's Empowerment Principles initiative under a partnership between UNIFEM and the United Nations Global Compact.

investors, non-governmental organizations, academia and professional organizations working together.

Gender stereotyping exists

6. Gendered divisions of labour are the result of perceptions of what constitutes appropriate work for women and have perpetuated social norms and gender stereotypes. According to the 2010 Education For All Global Monitoring Report, the share of out-of-school girls has declined from 58 per cent to 54 per cent, and the gender gap is narrowing in primary education in many countries. However, in order to get girls to stay in school an environment must be created which will successfully foster their progress from primary to secondary school and possibly post-secondary education. Girls need a better understanding of the world of work, they need to experience working in jobs traditionally done by men, and they need more and better career information, advice and guidance. Education and training, particularly in those vocational subjects mainly taken up by boys, should be made more accessible and appealing to girls. If girls are made more aware of the consequences of their choices for their future pay and career progression, they might make different choices.

7. Although family and care responsibilities may limit women's choice of careers, in fact research has suggested that besides gender role stereotyping, the options available to women are limited by social and structural factors, such as limited childcare options and a lack of flexible working options. The number of women and underrepresented minorities in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines has greatly improved over the past several decades, but institutional efforts to recruit, train, retain, and promote their participation in STEM fields are still inadequate.

8. Women are 51 per cent of the nation's population. Using their talents to the fullest at all levels of scientific and technological education, training and employment is an economic necessity and an investment in a country's future national development. IFBPW believes that continued underrepresentation and under-participation of women in SET-based education, training and employment is not only a cause for social concern on equity grounds, it is also likely to inhibit a country's capacity to develop internationally competitive research and industries.

9. For nearly 40 years, the Association for Women in Science has promoted diversity in the academic and corporate scientific workplace maintaining that a diverse scientific workforce will benefit not only individual scientists but also the national economy. Industries that have made efforts to enhance diversity in their workplace argue that increasing diversity can serve to improve innovation, productivity, and global competition. It therefore makes sense for an organization to be an inclusive employer, appealing to as diverse a range of people as possible.

Participation of women and girls in education, training and lifelong learning

10. Women represent 60 per cent of university graduates in Europe and North America, in excess of 50 per cent in the Asia-Pacific region, and 70 per cent in the United Arab Emirates. According to the 2010 MDG report, access to education has increased globally for girls at all levels, and particularly in primary education, over the last decade. However, despite the fact that in many developed countries women now account for more than half of college and university graduates, job

opportunities for women and the wages paid to them still lag behind those of their male counterparts, even in developed countries, and these gaps are even larger in most developing countries. **Equality in education has failed to translate into equality in the workforce.** This is clearly illustrated by the low level of women's representation in leadership and decision-making positions in all sectors. Improvements in access to education, skills development and training are essential to enhance women's access to emerging opportunities. Strengthening gender equality will increase the probability of organizations' recruiting the best people for the job, rather than just the best of the traditionally available pool.

11. To ensure equal access to employment, families, schools and the media, among other structures and agencies, should undertake the following strategies: enhance girls' access to education; desegregate education so that girls and boys can learn together; promote "employment-based" education, not just skills for specific jobs; raise awareness and combat gender stereotyping; encourage equal skills development for girls and boys.

12. In a modern economy, lifelong learning is vitally important. Workers need to be adaptable and able to take advantage of the growth of new sectors and new technologies. Opportunities for women to equip themselves with the skills and confidence to move into management roles and occupations traditionally regarded as "men's jobs" are important.[2] Lifelong learning, apprenticeship opportunities, and vocational training policies must be oriented towards gender equity and accessible equally to both women and men to enable them to adapt to changing skills and technological demands. Setting targets for gender balance within training, ensuring flexible training delivery times and methodologies, eliminating stereotypes in curricula, and raising awareness in the wider community can be helpful in facilitating equal access for women to these opportunities.

Equal pay for work of equal value

13. Gender equality is now globally accepted as a necessity for sustainable development and poverty reduction for women and men, improving living standards for all. Despite advances in educational levels, women are overrepresented in low-paying jobs; women are underrepresented in executive, management and technical positions.

14. It is easy to identify direct wage discrimination between men and women performing the same job, but it is harder to identify and remedy unequal remuneration for "work of equal value". Remedying such inequities is essential. Special effort must be made so that the principle of equal pay for "work of equal value" is understood and applied, as appropriate, for example, by job evaluation on the basis of objective and non-discriminatory criteria.

15. Overall, throughout the world, the figures for the gender pay gap range from 13 per cent to 23 per cent.[3] To maintain fair and equitable workplaces, IFBPW launched the Equal Pay Day awareness campaign internationally in 2009, mobilizing members around the world to educate their communities and the private sector on the benefits of pay equity. Affiliates provide illustrations of the number of

[2] Women and Work Commission, "Shaping a fairer future".

[3] C. Chubb, S. Melis, L. Potter and R. Storry, eds., International Trade Union Confederation Reports 2008, "The Global Gender Pay Gap", Brussels.

extra days women have to work after the end of the financial year to earn the same as men.

The rationale for gender equality at work

16. Gender equality is a matter of social justice and is anchored in both a rights-based and an economic efficiency approach. The benefits of achieving gender equality through better access to quality education and skills development, vocational and occupational training and lifelong learning cannot be overestimated. Decent work can be achieved by supplying productive and quality employment opportunities for both women and men and through strategies with a life cycle perspective looking especially at situations of transition in the lives of women and men.

17. The Women's Empowerment Principles are informed by real-life business practices, helping companies tailor existing policies and practices — or establish needed new ones — to improve the working environment through better choices for their "corporate citizens".

Promoting the interests of women and girls across the globe

18. In conclusion, the Member States approach to access and participation of women and girls to education, training, science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work, must stem from the fundamental principle articulated at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, that "women's rights are human rights and human rights are women's rights". Furthermore, articles 10 and 11 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) calls for appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure equal rights with men in the field of education and in the workplace, including non-discrimination in employment, equal pay for equal work, and paid maternity leave.

19. Because gender equality can bring early returns, Governments must affirm their commitment to it and develop the legal policies and frameworks to make it work. Gender equality is integral to a more far-sighted strategy, one that ensures that science, education and technology play their full part in the regeneration of the economy, and that enable women to play a full and active role as scientists, technologists and members of society. While there has been measurable progress in improving the lives of women and girls, critical goals remain unfilled and need global attention and global action. If gender equality is a birthright, why would we settle for anything less?